

FINAL

BAC 2004 Minutes
Meeting Date: 10/05/04

Milford Budget Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes Minutes Approved 10/12/04 Meeting Date 10/05/04

Attendance:

Bill Fitzpatrick
Don Caisse
Didi Carter
Mike Roske
Kevin Taylor
Gil Archambault
Bob Courage

Topics of Discussion:

BAC Membership Changes
Approval of Minutes
Continuation of Review of BOS budgetary meetings
Department Review
 Building/Zoning
 Town Clerk/Tax Collector
 Conservation
New Business:
 Recommendation to Information Systems Reviewers
 Recommendation to Fire Department Reviewers

Next Meeting: Next BAC meeting will be at 7:30 on Tuesday 10/12, in the Keyes Meeting Room at the Wadleigh Memorial Library. There is a BOS budget work session on Monday 10/11 from 7am until 3pm in the BOS meeting room. BAC members are welcome to attend.

BAC MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

Bob Courage has joined the BAC as the ninth member. The BAC welcomes Bob's experience to the group.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The BAC voted 7-0 (2 absent) to approve the meeting minutes of the 9/28 BAC meeting. Approved minutes will be forwarded to Alan Woolfson to be posted to the Town website for public review.

CONTINUATION OF REVIEW OF BOS BUDGETARY MEETINGS:

1. Fire Department/Emergency Frequencies:

At the 9/30 BOS budget review, it was noted that the Fire Department, together with other emergency services, requires a frequency conversion for pagers and other communication equipment. This frequency conversion allows the town to take advantage of a frequency permit recently granted by the FCC for Milford only. This conversion will cost approximately \$40,000. There is a possibility of obtaining grants to offset \$30,000 of the cost. The BOS has not yet determined if the conversion must be

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performed, and if so, whether grants would apply. If the conversion is performed, it is believed that it can be accomplished using surplus funds in the 2004 budget.

2. **Town Employees:**

Also at the 9/30 discussion session, the BOS expressed frustration that the selectmen are not totally aware of hiring of new employees to cover new and/or unfilled positions. In the past, the BOS has been notified by department heads of any newly hired employees, but did not have any approval authority over hiring or other personnel actions. For the near term, the BOS has imposed a hiring freeze on all departments until this internal management issue can be worked out.

It would be helpful if the BOS had access to a Management Information System that would allow selectmen to review current information about town staffing and identify recent changes. Presently, any information requested by the BOS must be researched by the Town Administrator and reported at the next meeting. Having immediate access during regular BOS meetings would eliminate these delays. .

DEPARTMENT REVIEW:

1. **Building/Zoning**

The Building and Zoning department budgets do not show any significant deviations from the 2004 budgets. The only account within the budget that is not following the typical spending curve is the training account. Meaningful training is difficult to locate for the \$550 budgeted within the year. Many courses start at \$600-\$800 per session. Kevin Lynch is looking around for Internet-based courses that may be available at lower costs.

The primary addition to the Building/Zoning budget for 2005 is the MUNIS Building and Permits module. This software is a plug-in module for the existing MUNIS software owned by the Town. The Building and Permits module would allow the Building department to perform much more efficiently, performing many routine tasks online and therefore reducing the burden on counter staff. This MUNIS module is also compatible with the GIS system, simplifying the sharing of data among other town departments.

The BOS has approved the \$13,500 cost for installation, configuration, and staff training for the MUNIS Building and Permits module in 2005. The BAC voted 7-0 (2 absent) to support this cost.

2. **Town Clerk/Tax Collector**

Plans are currently underway for a town-wide reorganization that would move the position of Tax Collector into the Finance Department. This move would be for administrative purposes only, but may involve some rearranging of office space at the Town Hall.

There were no concerns with the Town Clerk/Tax Collector's budget for 2005.

3. **Conservation**

The Conservation Department currently manages 700-800 acres of Town-owned land, easements, and other encumbrances for the purposes of Conservation. The department is looking into a significant land purchase that may appear as a high-cost warrant article for 2005 (>\$1M). There is much buildable land still available in Milford, and the

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Conservation department works closely with the Planning department to ensure that open space is maintained.

It was noted that in previous years, the Conservation department has included large Warrant Articles for the purposes of establishing a large land purchase fund without specific parcels under contract. This fund would be useful when conservation opportunities arise that require rapid response. In the case of the land purchase this year, a specific parcel is under consideration.

There were no concerns with the operating budget for the Conservation department in 2005. It was noted that the Conservation department is one of very few budgets that is allowed to "roll-over" funds that are not used in one year into the following year.

NEW BUSINESS

Recommendation for Information Systems Reviewers:

In reviewing the office space requirements, the BAC met briefly with the Data Operations Technician, Leen In't Veld. Leen explained that much of his job involves keeping the town's computer servers operational and that is a difficult task in the current area. He expects to move his offices to the new Police Station when construction is complete. This will allow an instantaneous switch to backup power in the case of interruption. However, it is unknown if the costs of this move are included in either the Police construction budget or the Town's 2005 Information Systems budget. This should be investigated by the team designated to meet with the Information Systems department.

Recommendation for Fire Department Reviewers:

The Fire Department budget contains "lots of money" to test and recharge oxygen packs. Fire departments in other towns have been successful testing their own equipment. It is believed that this test and maintenance operation requires personnel with special training and certification. This should be confirmed with the Fire Chief and the costs and benefits of performing this function organically be evaluated by the BAC team designated to meet with the Fire Department.

CLOSING

The BAC meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm.

Next meeting will be in the Keyes Meeting Room at 7:30 on Tuesday 10/12/04

ACTION ITEMS FROM 10/5 MEETING:

None.

VOTES AT THE 10/5 MEETING:

The BAC voted:

"The BAC supports the installation of, and staff training for, the Buildings and Permits MUNIS module."

(vote: 7-0, 2 absent)

===END=====

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